

Freeport-McMoRan Conditional Use Permit EIR Scoping Meeting Comments

The following is a summary of statements made and/or questions asked by the public at the EIR Scoping Meeting for the Freeport-McMoRan Phase V Oil field expansion, held on 2/19/14. The information provided here has not yet been analyzed nor verified for accuracy. This information will be passed along to the EIR consultant for consideration as the Draft EIR is prepared.

Project Description

- What is the total area of disturbance?
- Should provide location of each of the oil wells on the pads.
- What can be done if the oil field operator does not comply with required permit conditions? What is the trigger for a new initial study?
- Will the oil field operator drill wells that have bottom hole locations outside of the oil field surface boundaries? Will the drilling be directional - will it cross over into neighboring lots?
- What is the extent of directional drilling - what will be done as part of the expansion project?
- When will improvements be made? They should be made sooner than when the oil field is shutdown. Does any offsite electrical work (e.g., new power lines/additional capacity) need to be done as part of the expansion project?
- Would oil field operator need a permit from County if all the wells were only redrills?
- Who is liable for an oil release from a truck during transport once it leaves the oil field?
- What is the projected end of life of the oil field?
- How is the gas from the landfill currently used at the oil field? What are the intended future uses at the oil field?
- ‘What assurances are there that abandoned wells will be safe over 1,000s of years and will not start leaking oil?’
- Will fracking be a part of the oil extraction process?
- Will the replacement wells be on existing pads?

Aesthetics

- ‘EIR needs to address aesthetics along Price Canyon Road.’ ‘Can see the oil field when driving along the road.’ Will the visual impacts get worse with the expansion project?

Air Quality

- ‘Can smell the oil field on any given day.’ ‘Have to stay inside when odor is bad (sulfurous smell)– especially when wind is blowing in the right direction.’ With the expansion what will be the extent of the odor impacts (how far will they travel?) Will the odor impact the City of Pismo Beach?
- ‘The project will generate lots of carbon emissions and use lots of water to get the oil out of the ground.’ How will the carbon emissions be offset?

Biological Resources

- Would like to get information on the planting success from the Phase IV revegetation efforts.
- What are the actual numbers of oak trees that will be removed as part of the project?
- What are the project impacts to wildlife corridor through Irish Hills due to noise and light?
- What onsite mitigation measures will be used to preserve Pismo Clarkia, Indian Knob Mountainbalm, and 1000+ oaks that will need to be removed?
- ‘Will boron (from the oil) be measured as it is placed into the stream, to ensure toxic levels are not being reach? ‘Boron is a toxic element/nutrient for many plant species.’
- What would be the drill rig impacts on fish in Pismo Creek for drilling operation in close proximity to the creek?
- ‘Pismo Creek watershed has been known to be home for multiple streams with steelhead.’ What will be the overall effect on their habitat with the expansion? Impacts of RO system release rates on fish and creek habitat needs to be addressed. ‘Need to look at releasing water from RO to creek in a manner that mimics natural flows in the creek.’

Geology

- Will earthquakes or sinkholes occur due to the removal of the oil and just returning the produced water?
- Will the re-injection of wastewater fluid back into the reservoir result in earthquakes?

Hazards

- What is done with the brine waste from the RO plant? Where does this waste steam go? How is the waste stream treated?

Noise

- What additional noise will the increased truck traffic mean for Ormonde Road?

Recreation

- What is the status of the DeAnza Trail on the oil field property?
- Will the Phase 4 be fulfilled with regards to the DeAnza Trail?

Transportation

- Concerns raised about safety of pedestrians and bicycles traveling on Price Canyon Road due to oil field traffic. ‘Need better bicycles paths in this area.’
- ‘There needs to be improvements to Ormonde Road to include left and right-hand turn lanes.’
- ‘There is large truck traffic on Ormonde Road due to rail road trestle blocking large trucks from using Price Canyon Road.’ ‘These trucks are the large drill rigs and associated support trucks.’
- Will the project include a vehicular bridge over Pismo Creek? Will vehicles need to cross Pismo Creek?
- ‘The EIR needs to address traffic along Ormonde Road relating to the oil project. This road is used to move drill rig and larger equipment. There are traffic safety concerns on Ormonde Road due to moving of large drill rig and associated equipment.
- The EIR should include a full chemical analysis of VOCs from the oil field and identify components that represent health/cancer risk.
- How much truck traffic is associated with the RO system operations?
- Trucks on Price Canyon Road need to be addressed. There would be a large increase in trucks with the expansion project.

Water

- How much freshwater is currently used at the facility – what is the increase usage of freshwater going to be with the expansion? Need to look at groundwater use at the facility now and in the future.
- ‘Having problems with groundwater wells in this area.’ ‘A number of residences have had to redrill water wells.’ ‘Some landowners in the area have problems with oil intrusion into their groundwater wells.’
- How does the Reverse Osmosis (RO) system work at the oil field? Would it be possible to move the inflow further upstream?
- Is gray water a viable alternative to pumping freshwater out of the ground water supply?
- Are chemicals used as part of the steam generation process? What chemicals are used in the steam injection? Will this have any effect on the groundwater or soil conditions?
- Why should the county allow this project to be approved when 97% of the water used will only return 3% oil? Need to look at all possible uses for the produced water from the oil field and find better uses for the produced water.
- Will the oil leak into the ground water? If so, is the oil company liable? Does the oil field operator acknowledge that they are responsible for any oil intrusion into local groundwater wells?
- The EIR should contain a full description of the water cycle and distribution of water at the oil field. ‘The EIR should consider a water balance for the oil field.’ The EIR should discuss the depth of existing wells as well as the depth of the proposed wells.
- ‘Should provide details on where the produced water is returned to the oil field.’

- What is gray water and how will it help with the water balance? Will the gray water be pumped or piped offsite?

Misc.

- What is the County policy with regard to noticing of the scoping meeting for the NOP?
- How will the public further be noticed?
- Will the county have any policy or plans written into the EIR to Freeport-McMoran is complying with mitigation measures and ensuring environmental safety/integrity?
- What environmental impacts will need to be found to terminate this project?